

CTC NEWSLETTER

Career Transition Center

*George P. Shultz National Foreign Affairs Training Center
U.S. Department of State*

NETTING CAREER INSIGHT FROM BEACH VOLLEYBALL

*- by Penelope Trunk, published in CareerJournal.com,
reprinted here with permission of the Wall Street Journal*

Beach volleyball, now a popular event in the Summer Olympics, was once a backwater sport that big sponsors snubbed. That's when I was a serious player. Back then, there was little money to be made, no one ever dreamed about the Olympics, and a Midwesterner like me could come in 17th place in the nationals.



The next day, still very eager, I made my way to the beach where the professional players practice. But I was so sun-burned that I had to wear a turtle-neck and long pants. No one would play with me because I looked more like a homeless person than an athlete. And that image stuck for months while I tried - and failed -- to get games with top players.

Playing the game competitively taught me that I wasn't cut out to be a professional athlete. I found myself focusing less on the raw athletic skill and more on the strategy aspects of moving up the ranks. Here's what I learned along the way that prepared me for my next career as a software executive:

First impressions count most, so always wear the unofficial uniform.

As a college volleyball player who rarely saw the sun, let alone the sand, I was ecstatic when I finally moved to Los Angeles. I went straight from the airport to a nearby beach, hoping to start playing. There were a few guys at a net, and they let me play with them all day.

Learn the unwritten rules, and then network like your life depends on it.

When you're new to L.A., the only way to get a volleyball game is with a lot of groveling and a little luck. Players want to play only with those who are better than they are, and the player mentality is that anyone you haven't seen before doesn't know how to play. No one told me this, so I spent a few months annoying players far superior to me.

Then I got smart: I singled out a group of four women players who weren't as good as me. I ceremoniously asked to play, and they said no. I then showed up day after day, waiting for one of them to be out of town or at least significantly dehydrated, so the group would be desperate for a fourth player. When my day came three

weeks later, I was ready. They saw how well I played and invited me back. That gave me a foothold from where I could meet other players and start working my way up to better foursomes (who, at each level, would start by snubbing me).

Develop a brand strategy and protect it.

Getting a partner for beach volleyball is like getting a date at a bar: You have to look like you don't need one or that you could have anyone. I cultivated this look by attracting sponsors and wearing their logos as though I were an important athlete.

My first major sponsor was a swimsuit company. I thought this was a lucky break since I wore a swimsuit every day and I owned only two. Imagine if you had only two outfits to wear to work. Embarrassing, right? So I was thrilled when a swimsuit company I had never heard of offered to sponsor me (this company will remain nameless, but you might recognize it if you've shopped for a skimpy suit practical only for a hot tub).

The 20 free suits that arrived were so tiny that the fabric on my chest and butt left barely enough room to display the company's name. No one wanted to partner with a player wearing something like that, even if it was a great sponsorship deal. So I gave up the contract to protect my tough, powerful beach-volleyball brand. And I bought the 20 suits for no small sum.

Extend your core competencies while you look for the next big thing.

To be honest, I was pretty much broke during this time of my life. For starters, food was expensive for someone who worked

out eight hours a day. Travel costs also were high -- I flew across country to play in tournaments I didn't win.

So when a casting director came by the practice courts looking to populate a Budweiser commercial, I took the offer. My job on the commercial was to play volleyball. But it turned out the casting director wasn't

much interested in volleyball. In fact, there wasn't even a court on the set. When someone yelled "action," the 20 of us were supposed to act as though we were at a really fun volleyball party. And each of the 50 times the director yelled "action," the scene disintegrated into a drunken mob of men groping disgusted and misplaced female volleyball players.

But doing that commercial was one of the best decisions I made in my volleyball career. It made me see

that I didn't want to always scrape for money, and I didn't want to make my mark in the world in a bathing suit.

At that point I started looking around for something else to do with my life. And that's when I realized I had learned a lot of business lessons on my way to 17th place.

-- Ms. Trunk is a career coach and freelance writer who has launched new businesses for Fortune 500 companies and founded two of her own companies.



- Aldous Huxley

"A man who carries a cat by the tail learns something he can learn in no other way."

- Mark Twain

EDITOR'S NOTES



To learn more about job search skills and resources, try these books and websites:

Howard Figler

The Complete Job-Search Handbook (Third Edition)

Top notch job search advice. Easy-to-read writing style. Author appreciates greatly the value of generalist educations and backgrounds.

Peggy Simonsen

Career Compass

How to replace old employment concepts with a dynamic new paradigm that will define your career success in the bold business frontier of the future.

Kate Wendleton

Guide to Targeting The Job You Want

This Five O'clock Club Series book discusses the new job market, targeting jobs that will be good in the future, and examples of people who did career makeovers. The author then leads the reader into self-understanding, developing a career plan, brainstorming possible careers, matching them against your values, needs and interests, targeting and researching an industry or company, and developing a marketing plan.

Kate Wendleton

Job Search Secrets That Have Helped Thousands Of Members

The author's methods help the job seeker to get meetings with the right people, beat out the competition, and negotiate the best salary. Get it, use it, and prosper.

BoomerCareer.com—www.BoomerCareer.com

- Publishes a free newsletter with helpful articles on job searching.
- Maintains a library of most recent articles
- Offers link to Diversity Inc. for posting your resume and searching for jobs.

Quintessential Careers—www.quintcareer.com

com

- Excellent articles and guidance on careers and job searches, including a "The Career Doctor"
- Links to other useful websites
- Free newsletter

The Riley Guide—www.rileyguide.com

- The *ultimate* job search guide that offers links to other helpful websites
- Free access

*"When you're through learning,
you're through."*

- Vernon Law, baseball player



JOB LEADS



These companies attended CTC's job fair on August 24th. You may want to check their websites to see what vacancies they are advertising.

- Academy for Educational Development (AED) - www.aed.org
- Access Systems, Inc.—www.accsys-inc.com
- ACDI VOCA - www.acdivoca.org
- Adecco Government Services -www.adecco.com
- ARD, Inc.—www.ardinc.com
- BAE Systems—www.na.baesystems.com
- Casals & Associates, Inc.—www.casals.com
- Chemonics International — www.chemonic.com
- Chugach Systems Integration—www.chugach-ak.com
- DeVry University - www.devry.edu/arlington
- Geneva Software, Inc.—www.genevasi.com
- Harlan Lee & Associates—www.hlassociates.com
- Integrated Management Services, Inc. - www.imsidc.com
- International Missions—www.

- internationalmissions.org
- John Snow, Inc. (JSI) - www.jsi.com
 - Lockheed Martin Corporation—www.lmco.com
 - The Louis Berger Group, Inc.—www.louisberger.com
 - Management Systems International (MSI) - www.msiworldwide.com
 - ManTech International Corporation—www.mantech.com
 - National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) - www.ndi.org
 - Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC) - www.nvcc.com
 - PADCO Inc. - www.padcoinc.com
 - Raytheon Company—www.raytheon.com
 - Security Management Resources, Inc.—www.smrgroup.org
 - Senior Employment Resources - www.seniorjobs.org
 - Snelling Metro Personnel—www.snelling.com/metro
 - U.S. Peace Corps—www.peacecorps.gov
 - United Nations Employment & Assistance Unit (IO/S/EA) - www.state.gov/p/empl/
 - Urban Institute—www.urban.org
 - US Airways—www.usairways.com

ATTENTION JSP GRADS!



JSP Follow-up Meetings

There will be 2 JSP Follow-up Meetings in November. Join us to

discuss your job search progress and share information!

The Follow-up Meetings will be held at 10:00 a.m. in the Shultz Center on these dates:

November 9 – Room C-3108

November 23 – Room C-3108



The next CTC Job Fair will be held on Wednesday, October 27, from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. in the D Building (Field House) gymnasium.

"I was thinking that we all learn by experience, but some of us have to go to summer school."

- Peter DeVries



CTC NEWSLETTER

FSI/TC/CTC

U.S. Department of State

Washington, D.C.

20522-4201

Editor: Amy Pitts

Telephone: 703-302-7412

Facsimile: 703-302-7416

E-mail: pittsa@state.gov